

sorry to say is part of the McConnell-Trump tactics we have found lately, but it gets worse even than what I have already outlined.

Republicans slashed funding for veterans by one-half billion dollars—not million, \$500 million—for veterans. It allows more pesticides into our environment. Republicans even used this conference report—listen to this one—to block the prohibition of Confederate flags at Federal facilities.

We should be working together to fight Zika. We should be providing public health experts the tools they need to fight this virus.

As we speak, we really don't know for sure because it changes daily, but there are almost 3,000 women who are now affected with the virus here in America, and 400 of them are pregnant. We have already had half a dozen born with birth defects.

Rather than doing something to help the public health experts with the tools they need, Republicans turned an emergency spending request into a wish list for all the anti-women, anti-veterans, anti-minorities, anti-environment, and anti-ObamaCare radicals in Congress.

Last night, the Republicans took this monstrosity of a conference report, rammed it through the House in the dead of night with no debate, and then immediately went on vacation but only until July 5. Is this how we should treat an emergency? Of course not. Is this how we should respond to a health crisis? Of course not. Shame on Republicans for turning a public health emergency into a partisan, political show.

#### GUN SAFETY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday I was privileged to join my Democratic colleagues in the House of Representatives for a protest on the House floor. House Democrats were demanding that Republicans close the terror loophole which allows suspected terrorists to legally buy guns. We wanted to stop that. In the Senate, we are also waiting for Republicans to act on gun safety just like they are in the House.

The senior Senator from Maine—a Republican—has proposed legislation to keep guns and explosives out of the hands of suspected terrorists and criminals. The Collins amendment isn't perfect, but it is a step in the right direction, and I will vote for it, but in order to vote for legislation, we need to be able to first have a vote scheduled on it. Yesterday the Republican leader said: "I'm going to be working to make sure she gets a vote on that proposal."

Frankly, I am an expert about what goes on here on the floor. I know the procedural problems my friend the Republican leader has so I understand that. I know sometimes it gets extremely difficult, but 48 hours ago, that is what he said, and we need to be shown a path forward. I don't see it, but we will wait and see.

The American people want us to prevent suspected terrorists from buying guns so I look forward to the Republican leader's plans for the day. As is the procedure here, the majority, the Republican leader, is allowed to speak first. He just wasn't here and his staff said I should go ahead.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

#### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 5447 AND H.R. 5456

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5447) to provide an exception from certain group health plan requirements for qualified small employer health reimbursement arrangements.

A bill (H.R. 5456) to amend parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to invest in funding prevention and family services to help keep children safe and supported at home, to ensure that children in foster care are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like, and appropriate settings, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bills will be placed on the calendar.

#### ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, combating the spread of the Zika virus has been a priority for both parties so Republicans and Democrats deliberated and forged a compromise in committee. Senators debated that \$1.1 billion compromise on the floor and voted to pass it. Every single Democrat voted for it—every one of them.

We went to conference committee and the House agreed to fully fund the Senate-passed funding level. Now, with the House's action last night, we have a chance to send the \$1.1 billion in Zika funding to the President's desk.

This agreement will allow us to focus on immediate needs like mosquito control, while providing resources for longer term goals like a vaccine. It also takes a broader view that U.S. experts should also have the ability to address other emerging mosquito-borne diseases as well.

The administration has called for Congress to take action on Zika by July 4. They have warned of dire consequences if Congress fails to act. Many of our colleagues here have raised similar concerns.

The House did its part, and now the Senate needs to do its part. This agree-

ment represents our only chance to put Zika control money to work right now. Again, it contains the exact amount of Zika funding passed by the Senate last month with the vote of every single Senate Democrat.

Keeping Americans safe and healthy should be a top priority for all of us. We know pregnant women are at particular risk. Democrats should work with us to pass Zika control funding again, not block funding for combating this virus. Phony excuses and made up objections to the funding we have already passed will not help create a vaccine or eradicate the threat of Zika.

We also have an opportunity to support our veterans. This agreement substantially increases critical resources to ensure veterans receive benefits and health care they have earned. It will enhance the oversight and accountability at the VA. It will help improve quality of life on military bases for soldiers and their families. It will also advance critical national security projects like missile defense.

The Senate voted overwhelmingly to support ideas like these last month, too. We should now vote to get this critical veterans funding bill down to the President for signature.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### OPIOID ADDICTION EPIDEMIC

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, the Presiding Officer and I are colleagues from the same State, so she knows as well as I know about the problems we have with opioid addiction, prescription drug abuse throughout our State and all over this country. We have come to a crisis point in this country.

In 2014, 18,893 people died from a prescription opioid overdose. These are legal prescription drugs that are made by outstanding pharmaceutical manufacturers. They are approved by the Food and Drug Administration. They are prescribed to us by the most trusted person outside of our family—our